

MONTGOMERY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
FIRE ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT
September 2001

OFFICE OF THE FIRE ADMINISTRATOR

Commission Office

Due to the events of September 11, the regular monthly meeting of the Fire and Rescue Commission scheduled for September 13, 2001 was cancelled. The FRC has scheduled a special meeting for Thursday October 25, 2001 at 7 pm in the EOB auditorium, to discuss the *Code of Ethics and Personal Conduct* executive regulation.

Research and Planning

Emergency Management

Attack on America – Emergency Operations Center activated immediately following terrorist attacks on World Trade Center and Pentagon, with briefings of the County Executive and Council members. EOC remained in operation through Wednesday to offer assistance throughout the region, support the USAR team, evaluate and make recommendations on security plan, and organize critical incident stress program for school and county agencies. Participated in Council of Governments conference calls, prepared situation reports, and briefed MEMA throughout emergency. Coordinated with Information office to issue press releases on blood donations through American Red Cross, and use of RACES volunteers to send health and welfare messages to families and friends in New York. Coordinated with Police, Facilities, and other agencies to ensure readiness of EOC to respond to high security terrorism emergency. Coordinated with MCFRS Automation section and DIST under direction of District Chief Buddy Ey to provide automation support to county agencies while activated, especially use of laptop computers and access to Internet. Since September 11th activation, staff have been on heightened alert for potential activations, providing information to county agencies as requested about preparedness.

SBA – The County qualified for Small Business Administration loans for businesses and non-profit organizations who were impacted by the attack on the Pentagon, the closing of Reagan National Airport, and the call up of the National Guard. OEM has coordinated with the Information Office to put out press releases and with Office of Economic Development to outreach to businesses.

Hotwash – September 20th the Emergency Management Group conducted a “hotwash” or quick overview of the September 11th EOC activation strengths, weaknesses, and issues for future improvement. Agencies are already working on improvements, especially in the areas of notifications, communication, and coordination.

Utilities – The semi-annual EMG meeting with the utilities and transportation networks was moved up from November to September 20th after the events of September 11th. PEPCO, Mirant Energy, Constellation (formerly BG&E), Allegheny, Verizon, Washington Gas, WSSC, Colonial Pipeline, Williams Pipeline (Transco) and Columbia Gas were invited from the utilities. Amtrak, METRO, Gaithersburg Airpark, DPW&T and Ride-On attended representing transportation. Prompt notification, security at facilities, and

improvements to coordination with EOC were discussed. Following meeting, notice went out to representatives regarding password codes for more secure communications for those facilities without a direct line into the ECC.

Bio-terrorism – Gordon Aoyagi, Dr. Carol Garvey, and other officials joined Congressional representative Connie Morella and Mr. Duncan for Town Meeting to discuss county's preparedness for chemical and biological acts of terrorism. Health Department has been working closely with OEM, State Health, and DC Hospital Association for monitoring systems for bio-terrorist events. EMG Hospital committee continues to meet with representatives from five area hospitals and two federal hospitals to discuss improvements to response to bio-terrorism.

Terrorism Preparedness – Press releases have been issued for disaster supply kits and family evacuation planning. Preparations underway for Saturday October 27th Family Disaster Preparedness workshop. Webpage has been updated. New webpage is www.mcfrs.org/emg.

Friendship Heights – OEM staff participated in a roundtable discussion/tabletop exercise with officials from DC public safety agencies, County police, Fire and Rescue, and other agencies. Topic was potential large scale evacuation of DC residents to Montgomery County in the event of "explosions at DC hospitals and bio-terrorist attack in DC." District Chief Lou Boozer participated also.

Annexes – EMG agencies, working through the EMG technical committees completed their review and update of the 2001 scheduled Annexes to the Emergency Operations Plan. Annexes are currently at County Attorney and OMB for review of legal and fiscal impacts. Substantive changes have been negotiated to Donations Management, Animal Services, Terrorism, and Evacuation and Shelter.

LHSC – Kathee Henning attended the Lowes Home Safety Council Board of Directors meeting in South Carolina. K.Henning represents the International Association of Emergency Managers on the Board. The strategic plan was finalized and over \$7.5 was raised for national home safety education programs. These include *Risk Watch*, *Masters of Disaster*, and disaster preparedness. *Risk Watch* will receive \$225,000 from LHSC to include disaster preparedness in the program. Over \$2.6 million will support two "Great Safety Adventure" traveling injury prevention trailers which are expected to visit over 200 elementary schools across the country next year.

SAR Exercise – Planning continues for November 3-4 field statewide search and rescue exercise, to be held in Little Bennett Park. Emphasis will be on use of search dogs, command post operations, and communications. MCPS has offered the use of a school bus for the Saturday portion of the exercise.

Decon Workshop – K. Henning attended September 27-29th Decontamination and Bioterrorism workshop at University of MD Shady Grove.

Red Cross – Attended Board of Directors meeting with Montgomery County Chapter of Red Cross on September 18th. Discussed regional response to Pentagon (ARC coordinated food service provided from 9 national organizations), national response to NYC, and potential improvements to blood drives.

Community Education Safety Section

Corporate Development Services

Fleet and Facilities Management

- Began outfitting the delivered replacement vehicles for the Collapse Rescue Team and the Honor Guard. (fleet)
- Collapse Rescue Team storage building, located behind FS #31 is nearing completion. Other than electricity, it is expected that the building will be substantially complete in mid-October. (facilities)
- Continued work with Apparatus Specifications Committee and Pierce Manufacturing on finalizing the build order for pumpers and aerial tower. (fleet)
- Delivered the first of five Operations Bureau Ford Expeditions to the vendor for conversion into emergency response vehicles. (fleet)
- Inspected old FS 25 and prepared floor plan for review to determine future building layout for continued use by the MCFRS. (facilities)
- Provided staff review and input to the Research and Planning Section on facilities projects that were submitted for the FY 03-08 Capital Improvement Program consideration. These projects included: smoke/fire alarm systems for fire stations, female facility upgrades, an addition to the Burtonsville FS #15, and new fire stations in the Clarksburg and Travilah areas of the County. (facilities)
- Received 2 replacement vehicles for assignment to the Fire & Explosives Investigations Section. Two 2 additional vehicles are scheduled for an October delivery. (fleet)
- Silver Spring FS #1 replacement project continues in the design phase. Several concepts, for what will be a multi-use facility, have been explored. Once the footprint of the facility is determined, actual station design will proceed. (facilities)
- Takoma Park FS #2 replacement project is somewhat behind schedule. Agreement has been reached on a schematic floor plan for the new station. The architect's rough proposal for exterior design is under review with general community acceptance at this time. Work continues to resolve temporary site and land acquisition issues. (facilities)

Information Technology

- Configured a number of personal computers for placement in fire stations and for new MCFRS personnel.
- Continued participation in PS2000 project by attending several work group meetings.
- Continued support of Headquarters Renovation project by installing additional personal computers and printers on the 12th Floor, EOB and resolving hardware problems as they arose.

- Distributed information in support of the preparation of the FY03 Information Technology budget requests.
- Managed IT activities for 9-11 Emergency Operations Center activation.
- Prepared data and responded to IT-related questions for County Council Fire & rescue Service briefing.
- Received dialogic program training and supported the installation of new program software at the Office of Emergency Management.
- Responded to several data and statistical requests from various fire and rescue work units.

Procurement

- Assisted the Urban Search and Rescue Team with the procurement of grant-funded shoring equipment.
- Assisted Deputy Chief Jarboe with the emergency procurement of chem-bio response equipment that was acquired through the use of Department of Justice grant moneys.
- Continued work on contract amendment for the Tele-staff contract.
- Began the distribution of the County Purchasing Card to identified cardholders. This card, which replaces the previously issued County VISA card, will provide greater purchasing options to the cardholders.
- Held preliminary contract preparation meetings with MCFRS and Office of Procurement staff regarding defibrillators/monitors, medical director, promotional exam, SCBA equipment and parts, protective gear contracts or contract extensions.
- Met with DFRS Bureau Chiefs and Budget Office staff to discuss "major" FY 02 procurements.
- Prepared 2 contract amendments for approval by the County Attorney's Office, Fire Administrator, and Office of Procurement.

Property Section

- Processed 279 property transactions during the month of September 2001.
- Assisted with logistical support to the Emergency Operations Center and the Urban Search and Rescue Team during the 9-11 activation.
- Maintained Property Section office hours for the receipt and distribution of gear and uniforms to field personnel.
- Met with Safety team members to discuss Training Academy protective clothing issues.

- Met various vendors regarding outstanding property receipt and distribution issues.
- Performed contract maintenance and oversight duties on active contracts for protective gear acquisition, cleaning, and repair, helmet, shoes, and uniform purchases.

Telecommunications

- Completed review of cellular phone usage by the MCFRS and met with the Fire Administrator regarding this program. (cellular phones)
- Processed 10 work orders for telephone service in support of the Headquarters renovation project, which resulted in the activation of new office telephone lines, 3 new Voice Mail boxes, and the acquisition acquired 3 additional telephone instruments (office phones)
- Programmed and distributed alphanumeric pagers for new MCFRS personnel and continued pager repair and replacement efforts. (A/N pagers)

DIVISION OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

Bureau of Operations

Administration

We have met with the regional Senior Operations Chiefs in several planning meetings for IMF and then as a result of the Pentagon strike. We are participating in the RBO process with a focus on ALS First Responder implementation. We were involved with the introduction of and family night for RC 20. Since September 11th we have been focused on emergency response and actions necessary following the Pentagon strike.

Safety

We have started the annual re-certification process for all PPE face pieces. We are working on a training program to implement the Incident Management System. When implemented this should provide enhanced fireground management with one positive outcome being improved safety in operation.

Specialty Teams

Collapse Rescue/Urban Search and Rescue:

The Collapse rescue team had a full deployment to the Pentagon. The duration was 8 days, with the mission being fully accomplished without injury to staff. The team did a rapid turn around and refit for immediate re-deployment and is now ready to respond to additional calls for service. The team leadership is working with the Bureau Chief to decrease response time by improved staffing and readiness.

Metropolitan Medical Strike Team

The team had its first ever deployment as part of the Pentagon strike. The team worked effectively with all agencies for a two week period providing detection, EMS services, and decontamination for thousands of emergency service workers. The team is now home and ready for re-deployment should it become necessary.

Swiftwater Rescue Team

RRATS received 3 calls for service. The team continued its regular monthly training.

Bureau of Program Support Services

Administration

Communications

Master Firefighters Branzell, Worton, and Ruth successfully completed the APCO "Communications Center Supervisor Course"

District Chief Patullo attended the Region 20 PSWN (Public Safety Wireless Network) conference. Representatives from police and fire were present to discuss regional communication concerns.

Five firefighters have successfully completed the entrance exam for possible transfer into ECC.

Dispatch Continuing Education: Evaluations and Quality Control

Facts for September

911 Calls Answered: 9,263

911 Overflow Answered: 842

Administrative Calls Answered: 22,549

Training

Recruit Class #20 began with 39 members at the Training Academy on September 4, 2001.

Exams completed for Emergency Vehicle Driver Testing in September are:

Written 11

Practical 6

In-Service Training Program "Rapid Intervention Company Training" sessions were held in September with 73 DFRS and 10 LFRD students attending. Flashover training sessions were held for 32 students from various other jurisdictions.

Training Academy staff provided logistical support to the Urban Search and Rescue Team and their Family Support Group during the teams deployment to the Pentagon and they're reunion celebration.

Three career EMT-Paramedics were awarded charge status in September.

Bureau of Life Safety Services

Administration

The 2001 Decontamination/WMD Symposium was held at the University of Maryland, Shady Grove Campus on September 27-29, 2001. Due to the events of September 11th the registration fell from 185 to about 150 participants from 19 different states. The speakers covered a variety of topics on Weapons of Mass Destruction and informational materials were distributed to the attendees.

Fire Code Enforcement

Fire and Explosive Investigation

In September, Fire and Explosive Investigators investigated 19 accidental fires and 14 criminal fire related incidents. The Bomb Squad responded to a total of 70 explosive incidents, of these incidents 57 were for suspicious packages. The total estimated dollar loss for accidental fires was \$ 549,500 and \$ 51,000 for criminal fire related incidents. Investigators also investigated five incidents where persons were burned.

The section participated and assisted with the Second Annual WMD Symposium at the University of Maryland, Shady Grove Center.

Support Unit 91, bomb squad personnel and Hank participated in the open house at Station 3.

The county suffered its fourth fire fatality during this month. The fire occurred in a high rise residential structure in a 12th floor apartment. The fire started in the bedroom and caused severe damage to the apartment. The cause of the fire is undetermined at this time.

DIVISION OF VOLUNTEER FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

- Greeted the new incoming recruit class
- Attended a meeting regarding CIP projects
- Met with Chiefs Strock and Long at Sta. 13 regarding Damascus VFD issues
- Participated in interviews for the Planning Manager, DVFRS
- Attended family night for the new recruit class, at the PSTA

- Attended a demonstration of the Vector System, at the PSTA
- Attended a preparation meeting regarding the upcoming IMF demonstrations
- Attended a meeting with the Metro Subcommittee (Chief Master and Capt. Jacobs)

NOTE – from this point in the month (Sept. 11) all meetings, etc., were cancelled/postponed due to the terrorist acts at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and the air tragedy in PA. The EMG was activated for a portion of this time with the US&R team responding to the Pentagon and other units dispatched to the Pentagon, Arlington Co., Wash., D.C., and back filling Mont. Co. stations. Also had Sta. 17 personnel at the WTC in NY

- Attended family night for the high school cadets, at the PSTA
- Attended the COG Fire Chiefs Committee, at the ICHIEFS Hdqts.
- Participated in a critique of EMG operations during and after Sept. 11
- Was Acting Fire Administrator for approximately 6 days
- Invited to meet with the KVFD membership at their monthly meeting
- Participated in two meetings with an ad hoc committee, with the CAO, regarding the preparation of a combined CE/Council ceremony for all who responded, in any fashion, to the terrorist acts
- Attended the Fire Board, Human Relations, Safety and Training, Fire-Rescue Association and Operations Committee meetings
- Mediated personal, personnel and/or sensitive issues with various LFRDs, etc.